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OUR VIEW

DIOCESE SEES NEED, WHY CAN'T STATE?

School north of CAP

After all the angst over school boundaries and overcrowded classrooms, north Scottsdale is about to get a new high school.

It just won't be part of Scottsdale's school district.

The Catholic Diocese of Phoenix this month announced it will open a coed high school in 2002. Notre Dame Preparatory will open at the site of the Tesseract School, whose owners have filed for bankruptcy protection. The diocese paid $17 million for the 36-acre site at 9701 E. Bell Road this month.

Judging from the clamor each spring to get into Brophy College Preparatory and Xavier College Preparatory, the diocese's newest high school will be an instant hit and a major educational asset for the city.

Of course, it doesn't change the outlook for the Scottsdale Unified School District, which is struggling to cope with an influx of new students north of the Central Arizona Project Canal and has no ability to build them a high school.

Despite overcrowding in the north, the district's southern schools are not full, and so Scottsdale won't qualify for money to build a new high school under the state's new funding source, Students FIRST, for a decade or more.

What to do, what to do?

During a three-month study of the problem last fall, the prospect of widespread boundary changes to even out enrollment had parents essentially rolling barbed wire across their attendance zones. This sent school officials sprinting toward the last resort: a bond election.

Voters in the Scottsdale district will be asked in November for money to build a new northern high school. It remains to be seen whether voters are willing to tax themselves twice to build schools, both through Students FIRST and through another district bond.

Whether it passes or not, it's nice to know there will be at least some sort of high school in Scottsdale north of the CAP.

The Catholic Diocese obviously sees the need to serve this exploding area. How odd that the state doesn't.

THE ARIZONA REPUBLIC

Editorials represent the position of *The Arizona Republic*, whose Editorial Board consists of Keven Ann Willey, Phil Boas, Jennifer Dokes, Doug MacEachern, Joel Nilsson, O. Ricardo Pimentel, Robert Robb, Laurie Roberts, Linda Valdez, Ken Western and Steve Benson.

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